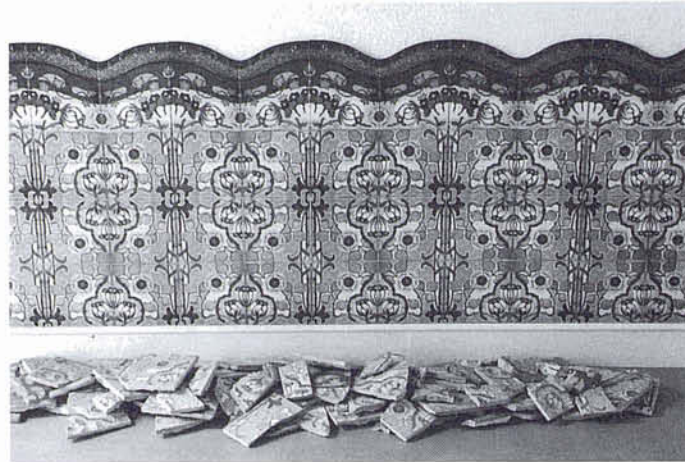


CATALAN ARTISTS AT BADEN-BADEN



THREE MOVEMENTS BY PERE NOGUERA. BADEN-BADEN, 1992.

THE CATALAN ARTISTS CARLES PUJOL AND PERE NOGUERA TOOK PART IN THE "I BIENNALE DER PARTNERREGIONEN", IN THE GERMAN TOWN OF BADEN-BADEN, UNDER THE GENERAL TITLE OF "CARAMBOLAGE".

ABEL FIGUERES ART CRITIC

During September and October 1992 the first *Biennale der Partnerregionen* (Twinned Regions Biennial) was held at the Staatliche Kuntshalle in Baden-Baden. The initiative for this unusual art show arose from the collaboration agreements between the most dynamic regions of Europe: Baden-Württemberg, Catalonia, Lombardy and Rhône-Alps, agreements that come under the name "Quatre motors per a Europa" (Four driving forces for Europe).

On this first occasion the exhibition had the title *Carambolage*, an allusion to a shot in billiards in which the ball hits all four sides of the table. However, as the Canadian province of Ontario also took part, the shot became a four-cushion

carambole with an extra bounce thrown in for good measure.

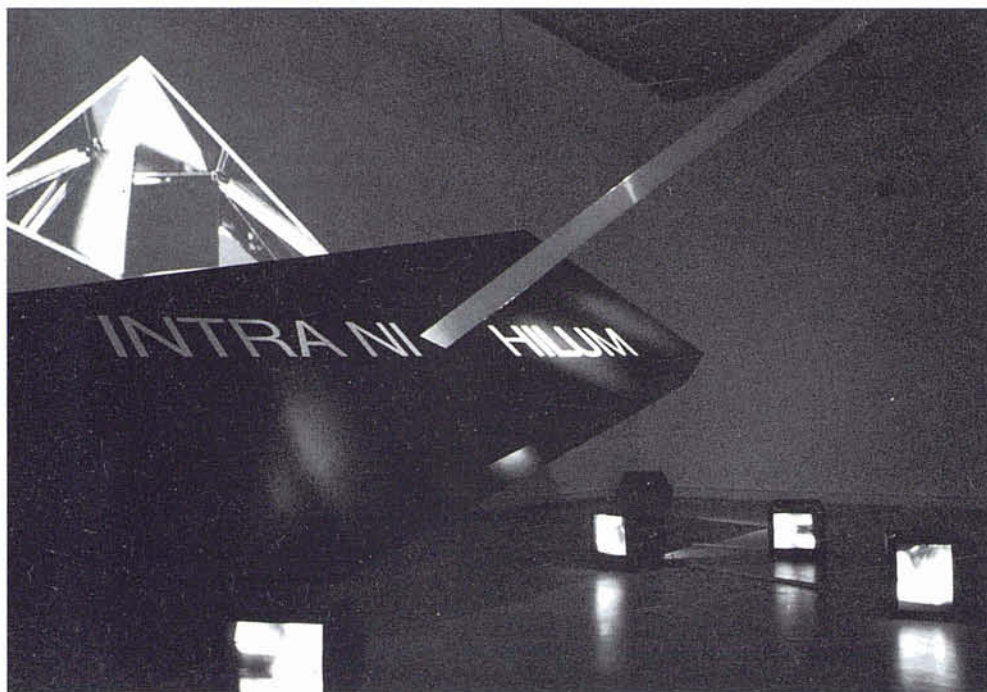
The show's main success was the boldness of its approach. Instead of the usual selection giving a heterogeneous representation of the art and artists of each region —exhibitions which tend to be fragmentary, muddled, reiterative, boring and which rarely have anything new to offer—, the selection was limited to just two contemporary artists from each country who were asked to carry out their work *in situ*.

The choice of artists for each region was left to a local specialist in contemporary art. Jochen Poetter, in Baden-Baden, chose Alfonso Hüppi and Platino; Rosalba Tardito, in Milan, presented Gianni Colombo and Silvio Wolf;

Adelina von Fürstenberg, in Grenoble, chose Ange Leccia and Jean-Luc Villemouth; Philip Monk, in Ontario, chose Robert Fones and Robin Collyer; while Teresa Camps, in Barcelona, selected the Catalans Carles Pujol and Pere Noguera.

The work of the Catalan artists was brilliantly suggestive and daring, in keeping with the solidity and the conceptual coherence of Carles Pujol's and Pere Noguera's backgrounds. Each of them had a room to himself in the museum. Both showed that they knew how to make use of the space and the time available to them, two aspects their work has always taken into account.

Intra nihilum, Carles Pujol's video-installation, was a kind of intromission, a



INTRA NIHILUM BY CARLES PUJOL, BADEN-BADEN, 1992.

journey or approach to the apparent void. Hence the title, suggesting that we are "in the midst of nothingness".

The installation consisted of a huge flat black piece placed in the centre of the room at an angle to the floor. On it were white letters making up the title of the installation: *Intra nihilum*. Between the "i" and the "h" of "nihilum" it was pierced by a long white wooden beam reaching from the ceiling to the floor and giving the appearance of a ray of light. On the floor around the large central piece a series of monitors were arranged. On these monitors, and projected onto the wall on a larger scale, one could see images that constantly changed colour. These images had been filmed previously using a small glass pyramid –no more than a few centimetres high– and showed the chromatic diversity produced in this small transparent solid by the passage and the reflection of light.

Pere Noguera's installation *Tres moviments* (Three Movements) played with the idea of reality and fiction, of the

real world and its reflection. It was made up of three pieces. One occupied the centre of the room and extended horizontally over the ground. The other two were placed on the wall. The piece on the floor was octagonal and consisted of a large flat wooden platform on which was resting a piece of glass of the same shape. The centre of the glass was cut into a zigzag shape and stood a few centimetres off the ground. In this central part –which was vaguely reminiscent of a meandering river– a series of objects stood on the glass, apparently reflecting its specular symmetry. But on closer inspection the spectator realised that the apparent specular images where in many cases also real, and this established all sorts of contradictory relations between the real objects, the specular images and the reflections.

A second part was situated at the bottom of one of the walls. At first sight it looked like a mosaic of colours similar to those used to decorate and bring to life certain types of premisses. This mo-

saic represented flower and plant motifs that were repeated in patterns to form a continuous, repetitive ornamental element.

When you looked more closely you realised that the mosaic was made up of colour photocopies and was therefore not real. Contrasting with this, Noguera had placed a pile of real mosaic fragments on the floor with the same ornamental motif as the photocopies. These fragments brought to mind a reality which no longer existed and which had been replaced by a copy by means of reproduction.

On another wall was the third part, two pieces, once again made out of photocopies, this time showing two old clocks placed side by side. The image of each clock corresponded to the specular symmetry of the other, although neither of them was real.

To sum up, Carles Pujol and Pere Noguera have, with their intervention in Baden-Baden, showed that the Catalan art of today is also one of the driving forces of Europe. ■